

Finding Yourself in the Feeding of the 5000

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John 6:1-5

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During his three-year ministry, Jesus probably did hundreds if not thousands of miracles, thousands. Wasn't magic, it wasn't slide of hand, it wasn't clever deception. He did actual miracles. They weren't poetic, they weren't metaphoric. While they're symbolic of spiritual realities, it doesn't take away from the fact that the miracles genuinely happened. They were real, actual. His opponents never tried to discredit the miracles, they couldn't. They were real. Their strategy was to discredit him because they could not discredit his miracles. It's because his miracles are real. They're history, not fantasy. They're authentic, not legend. They are fact not fiction. Now, of the hundreds, maybe thousands of miracles that Jesus did, we only have 37 of them recorded in the four books about him called the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, just 37, and now of those 37, there are only two miracles that are in all four of the gospels.

The first one is his resurrection. We celebrate that every Easter. The second one and the one we're going to look at today is Jesus feeding of the 5,000. It's one of the most familiar events in all of the Bible since you were little. Some of you, you've pictured a little boy, little lunch in his hand, out just gallivanting around the mountains of Galilee, I guess, going to eat his lunch somewhere on a rock overlooking the lake and he's going to do that. But there's a whole bunch of people that need to eat and Jesus needs his little lunch, and so as an active heroic sacrifice, he gives his lunch to Jesus, who takes what he has and what, and does more with it than you could possibly imagine. Nonsense. That's not what this text is about.

First, this word for boy, little boy that we picture, this word is used elsewhere for a teenager. Also, it was about evening time, so this wasn't a lunch in his little pail. This is probably his dinner, and this text is not about being generous or sacrificing for others or sharing, or God can multiply what you have. The little boy is not the hero. Jesus is the hero. Little boy is not the hero. You know how I know that? Because only this is mentioned how many times all four gospels, but this is the only gospel that mentions a little boy. If he was the hero, he'd be in all four, but he's not. No. The focus is on Christ and what this text tells us about him, but it's also a text that shows us how different people relate to Christ. So as we go, I hope you find yourself in Jesus feeding of the 5,000. You see, not only does this text give us insight into Jesus, but it also gives us insight into humanity and more specifically humanity in relationship to God, which whether we admit it or not or whether we even like it or not, that is all of us. We are all in relationship with God. The question is that relationship one that's going to lead to eternal life or is that one that's going to lead to judgment and eternal death?

One more thing. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scriptures inspired by God," which means every word of the Bible comes from God is the ultimate source, and it continues that every word of

Scripture is beneficial for four things, to teach us, correct us, rebuke us and train us to do what's right, which means that this very familiar historical event, Jesus feeding the 5,000 can teach us, it can correct us. This text can even rebuke us and it can train us to do what is right. So, get yourself ready for that.

Now look at verse 1. "After this, Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberius, and a large crowd was following Him because they saw the signs that He was doing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain and there he sat down with his disciples. Now, the Passover of the feast of the Jews was at hand." So first, let's spend a moment thinking point **#1) about *The Selfish Crowd. The selfish crowd.*** As we drop into this event, chapter 6 begins with Jesus on the eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee, which is about a hundred miles north of where chapter 5 ended, which is the city of Jerusalem. Verse 1 says, that he is on the other side of the lake, he's on the east side at the base of what is called today the Golan Heights, which is a place where there's often conflict between Israel and Jordan, and it is a place where the Six-Day War, if you are familiar with that 1967, this is in around the area where this took place.

The Golan Heights, this eastern side of the Sea of Galilee is today the western border of the country of Jordan. As far as timing goes, chapter 6 takes place about 6 to 12 months after the events of chapter 5. We know that this happened in the spring. So, because this event is in all four gospels, we can take pieces from all the events from all the gospels and put it together to get a full view of what took place on that day. Mark 6:39 says the grass was green. Now, if you've been to this part of the world, the grass is green in the spring before. The summer, heat bakes the ground, kills the grass, and everything turns brown. Kind of like what happens? We don't know anything about that, right. Oh yeah, they don't have summer grass in this part of the world, still don't. Now we also know this is springtime because verse 4 says that it's almost the holiday of Passover, which takes place in the spring, March or April. So that also means by the way that we are one year from Jesus actually being crucified. Matthew, Mark and Luke also say it's the late afternoon, and so it's early evening, so think 4:00, 5:00, 6:00 in the evening. So, I want you to picture this in your head, so it's evening in verse 3 says, we find Jesus and the disciples by themselves on a hill. Matthew, Mark and Luke say that they're there to rest. They're there to debrief about ministry. They've done a ministry campaign in this area, and so now they're resting, and it also says that they are on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee for protection.

Jesus has heard that John the Baptist has been executed and because John and Jesus are related and they have ministries were related, he's like, I'm going to get out of there. I'm going to get away and get to a place that's safe. Other gospels describe this as a desolate place, speaks to the fact that on this side of the lake, there's not a lot of people there. It's a great spot for them to be all by themselves, rest, debrief, and be protected. That's not what happened. Just the opposite happened. When people saw Jesus and his disciples making their way over there, people start waving, that's Jesus. Hey, hey, he's been healing people. Hey, we got to go talk to Him. We got to go over there. So, word starts to spread to the surrounding town, and crowds of people start flocking to them on the mountain and we learn in chapter 5, the Jewish authorities, they're

persecuting Jesus and want them dead, but to the crowds, the general population, he's still incredibly popular and why wouldn't he be? He has healed hundreds if not thousands of people by now.

Verse 2 says, the crowds keep coming to him because they keep seeing him and he keeps doing miracles, healing their sick, their deformed, their tormented. He did this according to Mark 6:24 because he had compassion on them. It says that he looked out and saw them as sheep without a shepherd, hundreds and hundreds of them without a leader to teach them and take care of them. One more thing, verse 10 says that there were 5,000 men. But Matthew 14:21 says, quote, "Those who ate were about 5,000 besides women and children." So, what we're talking about is not the defeating of the 5,000, but probably something like the feeding of the 20,000. Think Diamondbacks home game, the last home game for the Diamondbacks had 14,000 people. So, think typical chase field for Diamondbacks game about a third full, mostly empty.

So that's what you got here, 10 to 20,000 people. Now, despite the compassionate way that Jesus sees them, verse 2 says, "They kept coming to him," notice, "because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick." It sounds like that they are there, that this is a neutral description, but it's not. What this says is that the crowd was after Jesus because of what Jesus could do for them. So this is not saving faith, this is the almost Christian attracted to Jesus but still doesn't give him their allegiance. They admire him, they adore him. Maybe they stand in awe of him, but they don't adhere to his teachings, and they certainly don't believe in him as the one who will save them from all of their sins. Why? Because they are there for the sensational. They're there for the feels, they want to be blown away. They're seeking thrills, they're seeking the highs, they're not seeking salvation. They're not recognizing him as the Son of God. So, there's no repentance or faith or real following of Jesus from the crowd. They're all about the physical, not the spiritual, the earthly, not the heavenly this life, not the next. They want his benefits, they want his blessings, but they don't want him. They saw the signs, but they missed the substance. They missed the message of the signs that if this man has power over demons, power over disease, and even power over death, if that's who he is, then he's not just amazing, he is the God man. He's the Son of God, but their own selfish desires blind them from seeing who Jesus really is and listen, it's not just them, right? How many people follow Jesus today because of what he can do for them.

They come to Jesus; they give him a shot. They take a chance to see if he's going to get them that job or get them that spouse or make them well or make them happier, make them healthier or wealthier, have them accomplish their goals, hit their sales numbers, or get that promotion, or make the team, or get into that college, on and on and on. They're in it for how God makes them feel, what God can do for their earthly lives, helping them live their best life. That's what God wants. He wants me to live my best life, so he's going to help me do that, baptizing every selfish desire they have along the way. So Jesus then is followed on kind of a trial basis. As long as you give me what I want, I'm in, but do something I don't like, say something I don't like, I'm out.

This is actually what happened to this crowd of thousands of people. By the end of the very next day, He offends them with something that he says, and chapter 6:66, "So they left him." 20,000 people plus the 12 disciples one day earlier, by the very next day is just 12 disciples following him. All right, well, if it gets too hard, if things don't work out, if I'm not happy, if I'm not getting anything out of it, if I'm not feeling it anymore, then I'm done. Some will even call Jesus Lord, but reach a point when they're like, you know what? I'm going to be the Lord. They're never going to say that, but what they do is they twist the truth to make God a servant to their own selfish, self-centered desires. It's not denial of self and follow Jesus. It's not I'm coming to you Jesus, because you are the Lord. You're God, you're in charge no matter what. I'm your servant, I'm your slave. My will is to do your will and nothing and no one is better or means more to me than you, not even myself. You are everything. The crowds are not doing that. The crowds are flocking to Jesus to meet him on their terms, not his. Here's the thing about Jesus, it's his terms or nothing, right, and his terms are trust in him. Come to him with repentant faith, a faith that turns from your resistance, that turns from your rebellion against God and trust that Jesus will forgive you. Trust that he is merciful and kind and gracious, that he will cleanse you from all of your sin, that he will rescue you from the hell you deserve for your sins.

My son, Colin, is taking karate and he's been doing that now for over three years, and when he and I would talk about why he does it, I never say to him, you're doing it to make your life better. Because then he could say to me, what? I don't like it anymore, It's boring or it's too hard. Now, you know what I say to him? You're taking karate because you might need it someday. If a bad guy tries to hurt you or your siblings or your wife and or your kids, you're going to be really happy when you know how to defend yourself. See, in the same way, it isn't coming to Jesus to see, is he going to make my life better? It's coming to him knowing you're going to need him one day. You're going to need him to defend you before God and say, that one is mine. I have that one. They trust in me. You're going to need him to defend you one day, and then if you have Christ, then come what may in this life, greatness or abject pain. You know what? That's not great, but I have Christ. I have forgiveness. I have eternal life, and if that's all I've got, at least I've got him, and that's all that matters. The crowds wanted Jesus for their own selfish, earthly physical needs. They weren't there because of who he is.

Let's see if there's better news in his disciples. Look at verse 5, "Lifting up his eyes then and seeing that a large crowd was coming towards Him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread so that these people may eat? He said this to test him for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, 200 denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.'" Not exactly the response you would expect from a guy who's been following Jesus for over a year at this point. Well, let's take a closer look at point #2) ***The Skeptical Disciples.*** ***Skeptical disciples.*** Jesus is attentive to the needs of the crowd. Even though they are there for selfish reasons, he's going to be gracious and merciful. They've been listening to him teach, and so they're watching him heal the sick and the day is wearing away. The dinner was approaching, and so he knew they had to be getting hungry, and I want you to think about that. It's an

incredible picture of a God who is aware of our needs and not only cares for our needs but works to provide for our needs.

He even got his disciples involved in meeting the massive need for food that the crowd had, and I know I said it last week, but listen, please, God is not disconnected from your reality. He knows what is going on. This text, many others show a God who is intimately and intricately involved in the very details of our lives. He's not so high and lofty and exalted that he doesn't know what you need. He doesn't see what's going on, he does. He knows and he cares. So don't use theology in an unbiblical way. Use theology, say, God, you are high and exalted. Yes, but you are a God who cares for your people. So I'm going to cry out to you.

Now, Matthew, Mark and Luke say, the disciples approach Jesus with, hey, this place is deserted, and the day is coming to an end and hey, send these people into the villages all around here so that they can get some food and find a place to sleep. But John tells us that He turns it back on them and he says he turned first to Philip, who's from a nearby village in Bethsaida. We learned that in chapter 1, and so Philip is a local, so he's going to know where to get food, right? That that's why Jesus would turn to Philip. No. Verse 6 says why Jesus turned to Philip. He asked him what he did, to test him to see if Philip would respond with faith in Him. But little Phil did not respond in faith, even though Phil had seen hundreds of miracles, maybe thousands by this time. Did you notice that Phil actually responds with a touch of mockery? Verse 7, "200 denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to eat a little." A denarii was what you would get for working one day. The end of the day, you would get your payment and your payment would be a denarii. So 200 denarii 33 weeks of paychecks, eight months of work would not feed these people, Jesus.

Now what we see here, Philip's saying Matthew, Mark and Luke says, all of them say, so he's speaking on their behalf, which means all of them are skeptical of Jesus. What are you doing? And then Andrew steps up. Let's see if he's going to be better than Phil. He's also a local. He's also from Bethsaida. He's also Jesus' very first follower, but he is no better than little Phil. Verse 8, "one of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, there is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" What are they for so many people, Jesus? Mark 6:38 says that Jesus sent His guys into the crowd. Hey, find out if there's any food that everybody has, and they come back with five little cheap pita bread square things and two tiny, pickled sardines, and Andrew's here going, "But what is this for so many Jesus?" The need is enormous. Resources are insufficient. What are you thinking, Jesus? Feeding this massive crowd is hopeless for us with his little bits of bread and these two little sardines. They're responding in unbelief that he would even ask such a silly question. But verse 6, we know what they don't know. We know that he knew exactly what he was doing. He knew exactly what he was going to do. He wasn't stumped, he didn't need them, the local experts. He didn't need Philip's little math calculations; he already had a plan of his own. He just wanted to know, are they going to trust me in this moment right now?

Think about it. He's their God with them in the flesh and after hundreds of miracles, people healed, freed from demons, storms being calmed, all of that, raising people from the dead even. They still did not get Jesus. It's easy to bag on these guys, but doesn't it comfort you that Jesus worked with guys like this? Even though they'd been with him for at least a year, they still didn't get him. I don't know about you that that greatly comforts me. Doesn't it bring you encouragement that when they were faithless and skeptical and doubting and looking at the circumstances rather than looking at him, that he's still kind and merciful and keeps working with them anyway?

I'm encouraged that their lack of maturity, while never an excuse is still something that doesn't push Jesus away from them in disgust and frustration. I don't know about you; I find that incredibly encouraging. Also, John 6 is another biblical example of what Luke 18:27 says when it says, "What is impossible with man is possible with God." There's no such thing as an impossible situation to God. There are no impossible people. There are no impossible problems, when the God of the universe is with you in Christ. Like these guys, are you looking at some issue in your life, in your home, your friends, your work, your school and thinking, this is impossible. I have to take things into my own hands because God's not fixing this. Or he's not fixing it how I want. He's not fixing it when I want. He's got to speed this whole thing up, and so I've just got to take things into my own hand and do it.

That's what I'm tempted to say every time my daughter Ava asks for help with her homework. I just want to take it and do it for her, right? But when I do that, if I do that, it's because I don't really trust that she's going to get it unless I do it. Listen, God doesn't need us to do anything for him, right? Taking things into our own hands, not trusting God in a situation that seems impossible, that's being skeptical of God, that's immature. That's why I'm calling them Phil and Andy. They're true followers of Jesus, absolutely, but they were doubting, they were skeptical, and while Jesus doesn't openly rebuke them in this text, in this situation, in this problem, it was a test to see if their faith would be in him and their faith failed.

Could it be that the problem you're facing, the issue that seems impossible is the test as to whether or not you're going to trust him no matter what? Could it be that? These men, while heroes of the faith were not heroes, yet they were skeptical, not trusting. But they became heroes when the moment called for them to trust Jesus by giving their life for Jesus and their trust in him said, I will not deny my king. I will trust in him even if it costs my life. They got the lesson eventually, but they didn't get it now. Could it be that Jesus is teaching you, teaching me that same lesson? Are you going to trust me when you don't understand? Are you going to trust me when it's hard? Let's not follow the examples of the disciples here, okay? Let's trust Him and let's watch Jesus work. Verse 10, "Jesus said, 'Have the people sit down. Now, there was much grass in the place, so the men sat down about 5,000 in numbers.'" So again, I want you to picture it. It's late afternoon, much grass, 5,000 men, lots of people. Let's continue. "Jesus then took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, He distributed them to those who were seated. So also, the fish as much as they wanted and when they had eaten their fill, He told his disciples, 'Gather up the

leftover fragments that nothing may be lost." Notice again, Jesus doesn't rebuke His guys, doesn't shun them, doesn't give them the silent treatment, doesn't hit them on the back of the head, right? Instead, He becomes a host and he shows the people the generous hospitality of God as He serves 20,000 plus people there that day.

Point #3) *The Supernatural Meal. The supernatural meal.* Jesus tastes control of the situation. In the face of the sarcastic unbelief of his guys, Jesus says to them, "Go into that crowd and sit them down," and notice they listened. They didn't fight now. In spite of their doubts, they listened to the Lord and He told them what to do and so they're going in a good direction now. And what Mark tells us is that they sat them down in groups of hundreds and fifties probably to make it easier to get them the food. I mean, if there's 20,000 people there that day, that's 400 groups of 50. That's 200 groups of a hundred. Picture that. So in your mind, massive field, green grass day is coming to an end, and you've got these pockets, these packets of 50 to 100 people, and they're now sitting down, the disciples sat them all down. Now they're thinking like, okay, what in the world is going to happen right now? And interesting, Mark 6 says this, the word for groups that Mark uses is a word that is used elsewhere for guests at a party. In Jesus' words in verse 10, "sit down," it's a word that is used for reclining at a table to eat because they didn't have high tables like us with chairs. It was a very low table and you would recline and when you would eat your meal, you kind of lay on your side and eat your meal, and he uses that word, "Have them recline."

This is a God-hosted banquet. This is a party, and he takes the loaves in his hands and he gives thanks. Now, we have prayers that Jewish people would pray at the time, and one prayer that they would pray before a meal was a prayer of thanksgiving that went like this. So, maybe Jesus prayed this, "Blessed are you, oh Lord, our God, king of the universe who brings forth bread from the earth." Well, he was going to do better than that, right? He wasn't going to get bread out of the ground. He was going to create it out of nothing, right? After saying, Amen, John says, Jesus distributed the food to the crowd, but Matthew, Mark, and Luke say, the disciples did that. So Jesus gave it to his disciples, who then gave it to the crowd. Power of God is on display here. God's vast generosity is on display too, right? Because verse 11, it says, what? All the people there that day ate, "As much as they wanted." So much so, in fact, verse 12 says, they all ate thousands and thousands of them. They all ate until they were full.

Now, you and I, that's like every day, three times a day for us. But for these people, every single day, every single day was, how am I going to eat later? I've got to grow the food and harvest the food and bake the food and then eat the food, you're getting the food, you're preparing the food. That is your entire life. So these people know hunger. These people know starvation. If they didn't get any food, they're going hungry. They know what that is. They didn't have Costco. They didn't have grocery stores. I'm going to stop over there on the way home so we can eat dinner. That's not their life, and it says there what? They ate as much as they wanted. This may be the first time they ever ate as much as they wanted. This may be the first time they ever ate until they were full and they were full. Think about this, with bread made from ingredients that were never

in the ground, never grew, were never harvested, were never beaten into flour, and were never baked in an oven. They ate fish that were never born or swam or caught or were cooked. This was a supernatural meal that these people ate perfect divine food from God himself.

Now, in the text that I read; did you see the miracle? When did it happen? I mean, how is it that five little pita breads of barley loaves and two fish, how they feed thousands? I mean, did Jesus say amen when everybody opened their eyes, there's just a mountain of bread and fish in front of everybody? I mean when they took a bite, did they look in their hand and it was back again? I mean, did the disciples, they're just like, "Here", and then I just keep giving. How did this happen, and what did it taste like? The text doesn't say, and I don't know about you, I love that the focus is not on when the miracle happened. It's not on how the miracle happened. It's not on how it even tasted, which is all stuff I want to know. But John is focusing us on the fact of the miracle, that it happened. He's focusing us on the effect of the people which we'll see in a minute and he's focusing us on what it says about Jesus. See, the people there that day didn't know what was happening until it was happening, right? That's because it was so understated, so invisible, which by the way is how God does it all day, every day, right? God makes food today for billions and billions of people all over the planet, gets it to them so that they can eat and does it without anybody noticing him do it. You know what else I love about this miracle? It is completely unlike how I would do it, which I think supports the fact that it's real.

I mean, if that was me, and I suspect if that was any of you too, we would do the miracle with thunder and lightning, right? We would say, "Amen", and angels would sing and people would open their eyes and there'd be this massive plate in front of them, right? That's how I would do it. I'd fly around serving everybody. But not Jesus, not Him. This is the largest miracle Jesus did by far. It's the most massive amount of divine power to serve a supernatural meal like this, but you wouldn't have any idea. In fact, the only time a larger group of people was supernaturally fed was when. Was when God fed two plus million people every day for 40 years with bread from heaven. During the Exodus and after the Exodus into the wilderness wanderings, which by the way is an event that Jesus is going to refer back to later in chapter 6. But for now, in light of what Phil and Andy said, I think this miracle is also a subtle rebuke, not an open rebuke, but a subtle rebuke to every one of them.

Verse 12, "And when they'd eaten their fill, He told his disciples, 'Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost.' So, they gathered them up and filled 12 baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten." How many baskets? 12. How many disciples? 12. One for each of them to hold in their little hands and look at and say, you know what, I should have trusted Jesus instead of doubting Him. Let's not be wise in our own eyes like these guys. Let's trust when confused, let's trust when we don't understand, let's trust when not trusting seems so easy, let's trust when we are facing what seems impossible and even if we're facing something that seems absolutely impossible, let's trust Him anyway even when it feels so hard to trust Him. Because when you do, when you trust him, when it seems impossible,

when he fixes it, he gets the glory for that, and when you trust him when it seems impossible, you will not be ashamed when he fixes it because you didn't trust him.

Listen, you want to go through trials in such a way that when it's all over and you look back on the trial, you're able to thank God that you trusted him in the trial, rather than asking him for forgiveness, for not trusting him in the trial. Well, the disciple's skepticism wasn't a good response to Jesus before the meal, and the crowd did not respond all that well after the meal. Look at verse 14. "When the people saw the sign that He had done, he said, 'This is indeed the prophet who has come into the world.' Perceiving then that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by Himself." Jesus' response, getting away from the people there that day is all you need to know about point #4) ***The Satanic Plot. The Satanic plot.*** Once the people there that evening realized that they ate a supernatural meal, they recognize Jesus accurately. He is the Messiah. They call Him the prophet who was promised in Deuteronomy 18, the prophet who's coming into the world, who had come to the Jews, a prophet like Moses that the people should listen to. The crowd here that day, they have true theology. They saw Jesus correctly, which by the way is what John wants everybody to do as a result of this miracle. He wants us to look at the miracle and go, if he can do that, and that's real, which it is, He is the Messiah. He is the son of God. I should believe in him. I should give my life to him and I will live forever. Sins forgiven.

Truth theology though does not always lead to salvation. Truth theology doesn't always lead to the correct response, which would be faith in Him to save you from your sin. So this text wants us to come to the same conclusion the crowd did. He's the Messiah. He's the prophet. He's the one. He's the guy, but not have their same response. Verse 15 again, "Perceiving then that they were about to come and take Him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself." Instead of being served as a king, Jesus served them food. By serving them, Jesus showed what kind of king he is. The kind that would serve them ultimately by dying as the king, rejected by his subjects, mocked by soldiers who were part of a rival kingdom, right? Wearing a what of thorns? A crown for a king, clothed in a purple robe, a robe of royalty, crucified with two other criminals on either side because every king has a court, and this is what we think about your king. Instead of taking up a spear and killing people, he would be impaled by a spear and die.

They didn't want the kind of king that serves. They wanted the kind of king who reigns, one who would set up his kingdom and rule on earth after destroying their enemies, the hated Roman Empire, and crushing every bit of their pagan kingdom. That's what the crowd wants. A king who would meet their earthly needs, earthly desires for food and health and freedom, and if He's not going to go along with it, verse 15 says, what? They're going to kidnap Him. They're going to force him to. Don't forget what holiday is near. What holiday is near, verse ? Passover. When God used Moses, a prophet leader doing signs and wonders to set the Jewish people free from another pagan world, superpower, not the Romans, but the Egyptians. See the people there, the crowds hated Rome and this man healing the sick and feeding people who worked all day.

They worked all day again to get something to eat. These people see what took place in that moment and thought, this is our chance to be free from Rome. All the oppression, all the persecution, all the tyranny. If Jesus can feed us, then he must be the Messiah, and if he's the Messiah, he's the King, and if He's the King, he can set us free. Passover's kind of like their 4th of July. Nathen thinks about gaining an earthly kingdom without the cross. Think about this too. It's probably why Matthew 14:22 says that in this moment, Jesus quote, "Immediately made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side while he dismissed the crowds." Immediately, He did not want his guys caught up in this revolutionary fervor of the crowd. Now, why would that be? Well, think about it. One of his disciples is named Simon, the what? You know? Simon, the zealot. You know what zealots wanted? Armed conflict with Rome.

So is Jesus thinking? Well, is Simon the zealot thinking, whoa, this is awesome. This is great, let's go after. Hey guys, join let's go after Rome, and Jesus is like, get out of here, get out of here right now, and also, Jesus probably got out of there because this was a real temptation for Him. Mark 6:46 says that after this moment, Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. This isn't the first time he was tempted like this, right? This was a satanic plot that kept coming back again and again since the first time it showed up in the wilderness. Luke 4:7, when the devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment and said to him, "If you will worship me, it'll all be yours." The hiss of the serpent was in the crowd's desires to make him king, so Jesus left. The irony was what? He really was their king, but he is the king who will save them from their sins first and then one day come up and set up his kingdom on earth and reign. Now, listen, there's absolutely nothing wrong with Christians loving their country. Nothing wrong at all with being involved in our government and having earthly power. We have a representative form of government where even Christians can get involved in the political process and have a shot to rule if people come alongside and vote them into office. There's nothing wrong with that. It's great Christians should do that.

However, I wonder if Jesus' actions in verse 15 are a subtle rebuke to those who think that part of the mission of the church is to establish a Christian political kingdom here on earth. I think it is a rebuke to that. It's for the joy set before him. Jesus shunned the crown and took the cross, and for that, people from every tribe and language, and people, and nation, far more than 5,000 will be forever grateful. Because Christian, you have an invitation to another God-hosted banquet. You have an invitation that you're going to RSVP. You're not going to miss it. That banquet is called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Revelation 19. It is a moment when your faith will be sight and you will see what all of your trust in Jesus led to.

So, question for you. Did you see yourself in the feeding of the 5,000? I was there. I hope you saw yourself, maybe in the crowd or maybe one of the disciples. Listen, Jesus isn't who we want him to be unless we want the Jesus revealed in scripture. And Jesus doesn't do what we think he should do. You know why? Because we are not sovereign. We're not in charge, because we're not God. But every miracle and the New Testament is evidence that Jesus is God, and because he is God, he does what he wants to do and only what he wants to do. And we only relate to Him

rightly when we relate to Him as God. And if he is God, since he is God, let's trust him no matter what. Okay? Let's pray.

Jesus, the feeding of the 5,000 is a proclamation that you are God. And yet the text shows us really clearly ways that people relate to you when they don't recognize you as God. So I pray that you would use this text in all of our lives. James 1 talks about not seeing ourselves clearly in the Bible and walking away as if we didn't see ourselves. You've been working in all of our minds, all of our souls, and so I pray that you would give us the courage and the conviction to respond to your work in our lives by trusting in you no matter what. Please do this in all of us and through all of us. I pray for the glory of your name. Amen.